

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
Waste and Underground Tank Management Bureau
Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Program
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901
(406) 444-5300

November 10, 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.609, the following Environmental Assessment has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality concerning Copart of Washington Inc. \ dba \ Copart Auto Auction a motor vehicle wrecking facility.

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups or individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This Environmental Assessment will be circulated for a period of thirty **(30) days** at which time a decision will be made as to our future action.

If you care to comment on this proposed action, please do so within the allotted time.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Meyer
Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Program
(406) 444-2835 or e-mail at brmeyer@state.mt.us

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901
(406) 444-5300

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Division/Bureau: Permitting & Compliance \ Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Program

Project or Application: Copart of Washington Inc, d\b\a, Copart Auto Auction, Helena, MT - A proposed private auto wrecking facility

Description of Project: Copart of Washington Inc, d\b\a Copart Auto Auction, based in Helena, Montana, has submitted a motor vehicle wrecking facility license to this department for review. The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility will be located south of the Helena Regional Airport at 3333 Bozeman Ave, Helena, MT. The legal description of the facility is the NW ¼ Section 27, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, P.M.M. The facility is approximately 20 acres in size. The actual plat is filed under Doc. NO. 3064777.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: Copart Auto Auction is proposing to establish a motor vehicle wrecking facility in the Helena area of Lewis & Clark County. As required by the Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act, all wrecking facilities must be shielded from public view. "Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen. By obtaining a motor vehicle wrecking facility license, Copart Auto Auction would be allowed to: (1) Purchase wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking facilities.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider:

Alternative #1. Not to license the facility at this location. This would limit dealers' access to wrecked vehicles.

Alternative #2. To establish and license a facility at a location other than the one proposed in the license application. This would require the applicant to dedicate another piece of property or find and acquire by purchase or lease a different parcel of property for the proposed usage.

Alternative #3. To establish and license a facility at the proposed location.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: The facility will be limited to storage and sales of junk vehicles only. The license will prohibit the dismantling of any junk vehicles on site. This is a license condition enforceable by the agency.

Recommendation: N/A

If an EIS is needed, and if appropriate, explain the reasons for preparing the EA: N/A

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: Based on the information submitted for review with the license application, it is the preliminary determination of the department that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will provide an adequate review for this proposal.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: Lewis & Clark County Commissioners and the DEQ Junk Vehicle Program.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Montana Historical Society, and State Historic Preservation Office.

EA prepared by: Bruce W. Meyer

Date: November 10, 2004

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitat			xxx			xxx
2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution			xxx			xxx
3. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture			xxx			xxx
4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			xxx			xxx
5. Aesthetics				xxx		xxx
6. Air Quality				xxx		
7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resources				xxx		
8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy				xxx		
9. Historical and Archaeological Sites				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT: The impacts listed as minor in the table above will be minor to none, because of the intended management practices.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Social Structure and Mores				xxx		
2. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				xxx		
3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			xxx			xxx
4. Agricultural or Industrial Production				xxx		
5. Human Health				xxx		
6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				xxx		
7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment			xxx			xxx
8. Distribution of Population				xxx		
9. Demands for Government Services			xxx			xxx
10. Industrial and Commercial Activities				xxx		
11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT: The impacts will be minor for local and state tax base and tax revenue due to the size of the facility. The quantity and distribution of employment will be minor to none because of the number employed. The demands for government services will be minor to none and will be covered by county staff and state staff.

COPART AUTO AUCTION - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

General Comments

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality licenses and regulates motor vehicle wrecking facilities under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act (75-10-501 MCA) and Administrative Rules (17.50.201 ARM) .

To be eligible for licensing, a proposed wrecking facility must:

- 1) Be in compliance with all existing zoning ordinances on the date the license application is submitted to the department.
- 2) Be capable of being shielded from view of any existing public road. If the license application is approved, the applicant must construct all necessary shielding prior to licensure.
- 3) Not create any adverse environmental impacts.

The department has made the preliminary determination that the applicant is in compliance with the existing zoning ordinances as of the date of the submittal of the application and can effectively shield the proposed facility from all public roads in the area. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to determine if the proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility can be established without posing significant adverse environmental impacts.

Potential Impacts on Physical Environment

1. Terrestrial & aquatic life habitats
4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality

The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility will be in Lewis & Clark County. This facility will be located at 3333 Bozeman Ave, Helena, MT. The legal description of the facility is the NW ¼ Section 27, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, P.M.M. The facility is approximately 20 acres in size. The actual plat is filed under Doc. No. 3064777.

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility will disturb and displace an insignificant portion of the vegetation and rodent habitat within the proposed location. This impact should not be significant to the area's ecosystem.

2. Water quality, quantity, and distribution

The static water level in wells recorded in section 27 ranges from 35 feet to 150 feet. This groundwater depth was obtained from the well log supplied by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

3. Geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture

The soils in the vicinity of the site are classified by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service as the Musselshell-Cargo Series. These soils formed in loamy alluvium fans. These soils are well drained. The available water capacity is 7.6 inches. The native vegetation is mainly used for rangeland. Elevation ranges from 3,600 to 4,500 feet. The annual precipitation is 10 to 14 inches. The frost-free season is 105 to 120 days.

Waste antifreeze, gasoline, and lubricating oils contain petroleum distillates, heavy metals, and possibly toxic compounds which, if improperly disposed of, can cause surface and groundwater degradation. The applicant proposes only to store junk vehicles and not dismantle them at this location. Some lubricating oils and antifreeze may drip from the vehicles stored at the facility. This residual dripping is not expected to be significant or result in heavy soil accumulations.

5. Aesthetics

The applicant has built a solid metal fence around the entire property. The fence is eight feet high. The facility will implement a management practice for shielding the junk vehicles from public view. The management practice will place the junk vehicles against the south fence. An onsite evaluation by department personnel determined that the shielding would be adequate to meet the requirements of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act.

"Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen.

9. Historical and archaeological sites

The State Historic Preservation Office conducted a cultural resource file search for this site. "We feel that because this project has already begun any cultural properties that were in the area may have already been impacted. We, therefore feel that a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project we would ask that our office be contacted and the site investigated."

Potential Impacts on Human Environment

3. Local & state tax base & tax revenue

7. Quantity and distribution of employment

The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility may provide a source of used motor vehicles to the public. The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will allow the applicant to: (1) Sell wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking yards.

The motor vehicle wrecking facility may create an additional labor requirement and may result in additional employment. This employment and the employment requirements for the support services of this yard may provide a neutral to positive employment impact for the community.

9. Demands for governmental services

The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will require administrative and inspection services by personnel from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Lewis & Clark County Junk Vehicle Program.

11. Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

The motor vehicle wrecking facility at this location does not conflict with any existing zoning ordinances as certified by the Lewis & Clark County Director of Community Development and Planning.

Effect on Adjoining Landowners and Land Uses
Other Site-Specific Information

Information gathered for the preparation of this Environmental Assessment reveals the location of this wrecking facility should have minor impact on the adjoining landowners and land uses.

END